

# Pilgrim Wines Shiraz 2019

## **Terroir & Site:**

Perched on top of a North Eastern sloping hill, nestled between other isolated patches of hard to find vines, these vines enjoy prime views over Stellenbosch and its rolling hills toward Cape Town.

Manicured, and especially nurtured and kept isolated so as to keep safe from encroaching leaf roll virus off of neighboring farmlands, these vines produce amazing fruit. On the slopes of Stellenbosch Mountain – a landmark that epitomizes quality – its roots run deep into the decomposed red/brown granitic soils of origin.

Hand-picked grapes from specific clones of Shiraz lots include the internationally awarded clone SH7C as well as local fan favorite SH470

## **Harvest conditions:**

Although we received good rainfall during the season, the after-effects of the preceding three year drought was still visible and vineyards and soils will take some time to recover. Despite the good rainfall, warmer than normal temperatures – especially a number of hot days in July – initially led to low cold unit accumulation which in turn contributed to early and uneven bud break in some vineyards. The cold weather returned in August however, which slowed down bud break.

Spring was characterized by big weather fluctuations, which resulted in less, looser and uneven bunches, as well as smaller berries. Vineyards were off to a slow start and growth was erratic due to variations between warm and cold days, as well as cold soil temperatures. A heat wave at the end of October 2019 was followed by cold, windy conditions during the flowering and set phase of many vineyards.

Frequent rain showers in this period also necessitated greater viticultural inputs to control diseases such as downy mildew. The severe weather fluctuations during bud break and flowering, followed by cool windy conditions during set, also contributed to less and uneven bunches and smaller berries.

Weather conditions improved at the onset of summer. Warmer weather in November was conducive to vineyard growth, however berry development couldn't fully catch up.



Temperatures were moderate in December and January, followed by an initial hot February, as expected.

2019 tells the tale of two harvesting seasons – the first easy with good weather conditions and great grape analyses up until the end of February, and the second challenging, characterized by slow ripening following cold, rainy weather in March. The temperatures started dropping and nights were plain cold! Sugars accumulation almost stood still for a few weeks and the harvest pulled itself together. We had a great year! Fruit expression and structure are hallmarks and rarely do they go together with so much gusto as in 2019. It was a long year, the early fruit was early and the late fruit was very, but everything was good. The patient winemakers would be the good winemakers this year. Here's to a great 2019!

### **Vinification method:**

From the start, my intention to work with Shiraz was to produce the perfect in-between. There are in general 2 polar styles to Shiraz/Syrah in South Africa (hence the use of the 2 different varietal names depicting the style in which it is produced). One is the more traditional South African big and juicy fruit. The other style is one where the younger generation winemakers were so adamant to move away from the “old” style, that they went the polar antithesis to what has been the staple for so long (and good for them all to try and buck the trend).

That is what sparked my interest to produce something that is the golden mean, purely because the styles are currently so far removed, there should surely be one.

### **Winemaker's Notes:**

My winemaking trials included a lot of controlled O<sub>2</sub> introduction during the reductive stage of fermentation, so as to harness the fruit and extraction, to such a point there is classical fruit expression, but the spice should be more important. And then on the palate I wanted fine fine tannins with a long serious focus on the length and purity of the weight – not too big, not too lean, just right. The goldilocks mean.

Judicial barrels age saw this wine in barrel for 16 months and bottled in October without any fining or filtration.

### **Analysis:**

Alc: 14.0%  
pH: 3.43  
TA: 6.47 g/l  
VA: 0.58 g/l  
RS: 3.24 g/l

